

have anything that we had. And so they can share it with them as is appropriate.

Q. Do you have any reason to believe there was influence——

The President. No.

Q. ——attempted influence?

The President. I do not, but I think we have to get—you know, there's an investigation. As I said, the charge is serious; we need to get to the bottom of it. But I have no reasons to believe—I have no personal evidence, but that's not the issue. The issue is this charge has been made, it's—anytime you allege that another government attempted to influence an American election, that's a serious thing and has to be looked into. But I have no personal evidence, but I want the investigation to proceed, and I want the Justice Department to get to the bottom of it. And I expect that they will.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, and Mr. Brady's wife, Sarah, head of Hand Gun Control, Inc.

Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns

March 5, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns

Every day, firearms claim the lives of too many children. Firearms cause 12 percent of fatalities among American children and teens, and one of every four deaths of teenagers ages 15 to 19. These numbers represent not only violent crimes, but also tragic gun accidents. Firearms are now the fourth leading cause of accidental deaths among children ages 5 to 14. Moreover, firearms have become the primary method by which young people commit suicide.

According to a Centers for Disease Control study released earlier this month, the rate of firearm deaths among children up to

14 years old is nearly 12 times higher in the United States than in 25 other industrialized countries combined. The Center also estimates that nearly 1.2 million unsupervised children return from school to a home that has a loaded or unlocked firearm.

Recently, my Administration sent to the Congress our "Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Act of 1997," draft legislation that includes a provision requiring all Federal Firearms Licensed dealers to provide a safety lock device with every firearm sold. Safety lock devices will help to reduce the unauthorized use of handguns by a child at play or a teen who wants to commit a crime. Just as important, safety lock devices can also help deter gun theft.

I have urged the Congress to move this legislation quickly. In the meantime, the Federal Government can serve as an example of gun safety for the Nation by taking an important step to reduce handgun accidents and protect our children from injury and death.

Every year, the Federal Government issues thousands of handguns to our law enforcement agents. While some agencies have already adopted a policy of distributing safety locks for these handguns, this policy should be universally adopted across the Federal Government. That is why I direct you to develop and implement a policy requiring that a safety lock device—as defined in our draft legislation—be provided with any and every handgun issued by your agency to law enforcement officers. You should ensure that all Federal law enforcement officers are informed of this policy and that all issued safety lock devices are accompanied by instructions for their proper use.

All Americans have a responsibility to ensure that guns do not fall into the hands of our children. Your response to this directive will help ensure that this does not happen. Taking this simple step can have a dramatic impact on saving the lives of our children. You should proceed as quickly as possible to carry out this directive.

William J. Clinton

Statement on the Belfast Talks

March 5, 1997

As the Belfast talks on the future of Northern Ireland recess today for the British and local election campaigns, I want to emphasize the strong support of the United States for these historic negotiations. They offer an unparalleled opportunity for the Northern Ireland political parties and the British and Irish Governments to achieve a just and lasting settlement to the conflict that has haunted the people of Northern Ireland for too long. Violence can have no place in this democratic process. For the talks to be inclusive, as they are intended to be, the IRA must declare and implement an unequivocal cease-fire.

Under the skilled chairmanship of Senator George Mitchell and his colleagues, the talks have made useful progress. When the talks reconvene in June, it is important that they move quickly into substantive negotiations. I hope the participants will return to Stormont on June 3 determined to work creatively to make real progress. If they do, they will have my full support for the negotiations and their eventual outcome.

NOTE: The statement referred to George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland.

Notice—Continuation of Iran Emergency

March 5, 1997

On March 15, 1995, by Executive Order 12957, I declared a national emergency with respect to Iran pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Iran, including its support for international terrorism, efforts to undermine the Middle East peace process, and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. On May 6, 1995, I issued Executive Order 12959 imposing more comprehensive sanctions to further respond to this threat.

Because the actions and policies of the Government of Iran continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, the national emergency declared on March 15, 1995, must continue in effect beyond March 15, 1997. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Iran. Because the emergency declared by Executive Order 12957 constitutes an emergency separate from that declared on November 14, 1979, by Executive Order 12170, this renewal is distinct from the emergency renewal of October 1996. This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 5, 1997.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:46 a.m., March 5, 1997]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Message to the Congress on Iran

March 5, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Iran emergency declared on March 15, 1995, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 1997, to the *Federal Register* for publication. This emergency is separate from that declared on November 14, 1979, in connection with the Iranian hostage crisis and therefore requires separate renewal of emergency authorities.